

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 34378 230354Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 34378

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, TH, US
SUBJECT: NSSM 243: MAAG REQUIREMENTS STUDY

REF: (A) STATE 280041 (B) BANGKOK 33147 (C) BANGKOK 27949

SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS CAREFULLY REVIEWED WITH JUSMAG MILITARY STAFFING PROJECTED FOR FY 1978 IN LIGHT OF INSTRUCTIONS IN REF A. THIS REVIEW CONFIRMS OUR PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION TO REDUCE JUSMAG FROM ITS FY77 AUTHORIZATION OF 117 BY ABOUT ONE-HALF TO APPROXIMATELY 60 IN FY78. WE CONSIDER THIS A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION. AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, WE CONCUR IN A FURTHER REDUCTION TO ABOUT 40 IN FY79. JUSMAG HAS EXAMINED THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN IMMEDIATE REDUCTION TO 40 AND THESE ARE SET FORTH BELOW. MAJOR CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE THE IMPACT ON THE THAI AND A DEGRADED MISSION CAPABILITY OF THE JUSMAG. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 34378 230354Z

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS IN PARA 4 OF REF A WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED JUSMAG MILITARY STAFFING PROJECTED FOR TY1978. FIGURE JUSMAG HAS RECOMMENDED FOR FY 1978 IS APPROXIMATELY 60, WHICH IS SLIGHTLY OVER HALF THE AUTHORIZED STRENGTH OF 117 IN FY1977. A FURTHER REDUCTION TO ABOUT 40 IN TY1979, SPREADING THE FULL RE-

DUCTION OVER TWO YEARS, RATHER THAN AT ONE TIME WOULD APPEAR TO THE THAI TO BE LESS DRASTIC AND PRECIPITOUS. WE CONSIDER THIS A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION. AS WE NOTED IN REF C, WE ACCEPT JUSMAG RECOMMENDATION AND URGE DEPARTMENT TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ENSURE THAT THIS FIGURE IS ADOPTED AS OUR PLANNING GOAL.

2. AS NOTED IN REF B, WE ASKED JUSMAG TO EXAMINE THE IMPLICATIONS OF A REDUCTION OF THE CEILING TO 40. THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN REACHED.

3. THE MISSION OF JUSMAG IS TO ASSIST THE ROYAL THAI ARMED FORCES (RTARF) IN ATTAINING A CAPABILITY TO CONTROL INTERNAL INSURGENCY AND TO MEET A POTENTIAL EXTERNAL THREAT. REDUCING JUSMAG MANNING TO 40 WILL SERIOUSLY DEGRADE ITS CAPABILITY TO PERFORM THIS MISSION. JUSMAG IS PHASING OUT OF AN ADVISORY ROLE; BUT, AS THAILAND MAKES THE TRANSITION FROM A GRANT AID RECIPIENT TO AS FMS CUSTOMER, ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, PARTICULARLY AT MED-MANAGEMENT LEVELS, IN STRUCTURING A PRODUCTIVE AND COST EFFECTIVE FMS PROGRAM. LIAISON ASSISTANCE IS ALSO REQUIRED IN BRINGING TO A FULLY PRODUCTIVE STATE A NUMBER OF LONG TERM, HIGH-COST, SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROJECTS SUCH AS THE VEHICLE REBUILD PLANT, THE AMMO AND BATTERY PLANTS, THE PRECISION ENGINEERING LAB, THE MOD HELO DEPOT AND THE ENGINE DEPOTS WHICH ARE JUST BECOMING PRODUCTIVE. THE THAIS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY DEPENDENT UPON JUSMAG, PARTICULARLY IN LOGISTIC PLANNING AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. THEY ARE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN OBTAINING A MEANINGFUL DEGREE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AND A MORE GRADUAL REDUCTION OF THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 34378 230354Z

JUSMAG, AS WE HAVE RECOMMENDED, WILL PERMIT AN ORDERLY TRANSITION WITHOUT THE TRAUMA AND IMPACT WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSED BY A PRECIPITOUS REDUCTION BY TWO-THIRDS. REDUCTION TO 40 WOULD VIRTUALLY ELIMINATE LIAISON AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO UNITS, DEPOTS AND TRAINING CENTERS OUTSIDE BANGKOK. THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT QUALITATIVE AS WELL AS QUANTITATIVE LOSS IN THAT THOSE LIAISON CONTACTS NOT ELIMINATED WILL BE "STRETCHED THIN", I.E., THOSE PERSONNEL REMAINING WILL BE COVERING MORE UNITS, AGENCIES, AND ACTIVITIES ON A LESS FREQUENT BASIS. THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE COMPLETELY ELIMINATED:

A) LIAISON OFFICER AT SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS, ALL ARMY FIELD LIAISON OFFICERS AND ENGINEER, T/C AVIATION, QUARTERMASTER AND ORDNANCE LIAISON/ASSISTANCE OFFICERS;

B) NAVY COMMUNICATIONS, ELECTRONICS, AVIATION OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OFFICERS AND THE FULL CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE LIAISON AND ASSISTANCE TO THE ROYAL THAI

MARINE CORPS;

C) AIR FORCE COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS, LOGISTICAL PLANNING AND SUPPLY OFFICERS;

D) STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATES, MILITARY PERSONNEL AND PAY SPECIALISTS AND COMPOUND SECURITY AND SERVICES NCO'S

4. ALTHOUGH SENIOR LEVELS OF RTARF ARE AWARE OF PRESENT LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR MAAG'S OF MORE THAN THREE MILITARY PERSONNEL AFTER 30 SEP 77, THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO VIEW THAILAND AS A FRIEND. THEIR EXPECTATION IS THAT THE U S GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO SEE ITS OWN SELF-INTEREST WELL-SERVED BY THE CONTINUATION OF A FRIENDLY, STRONG AND INDEPENDENT ROYAL KINGDOM OF THAILAND. SINCE SENIOR LEVELS OF RTARF ARE INCLINED TO VIEW JUSMAG AS A REFLECTION OF U S FRIENDSHIP, INTEREST AND CONCERN, A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN THE JUSMAG WILL HAVE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT, PARTICULARLY IF IT APPEARS PRECIPITOUS. THE IMPACT CAN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BANGKO 34378 230354Z

BE ABATED BY A MORE GRADUAL REDUCTION WHICH WILL STILL MEET THE INTENT OF CONGRESS. A REDUCTION BY ABOUT ONE-HALF IN FY78 AND BY TWO-THIRDS IN FY79, PARTICULARLY WHEN VIEWED AS PART OF WORLD-WIDE REDUCTION AND CONSISTENT WITH REDUCTIONS IN OTHER NATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, WOULD DIMINISH THE ADVERSE EFFECTS WHICH COULD OTHERWISE BE EXPECTED.

5. REF A FIGURE OF 40 MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR THAILAND IN FY78 IS DESCRIBED AS "LOWEST" FIGURE CONTAINED IN OPTIONS NOW BEFORE NSC STAFF. IF, IN FACT, FIGURE OF 40 IS ADOPTED AS THE ACTUAL CEILING FOR THAILAND, JUSMAG WILL HAVE A SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED MISSION CAPABILITY.
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